

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 3385

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN ONLY

FOLLOWING TEL SENT MONTEVIDEO ON THURSDAY AUG 18 AND
APPARENTLY NOT PROCESSED BY POST REPEATED TO YOU FOR ACTION

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 3385

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN ONLY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (TODMAN, TERENCE A.), SHUM, PINT, PA

SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT
STROESSNER

THE FOLLOWING IS FOR YOUR APPROVAL AND/OR CORRECTION.

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR
LANDAU, MET FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR WITH PRESIDENT
STROESSNER AUGUST 17. FOREIGN MINISTER NOGUES ALSO ATTENDED.

2. PRESIDENT STROESSNER EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT AMBASSADOR
TODMAN, NOTWITHSTANDING HIS CROWDED SCHEDULE, HAD
BEEN ABLE TO VISIT ITAIPU, THE SITE OF CONSTRUCTION OF
THE WORLD'S LARGEST HYDROELECTRIC PLANT. HE THEN TURNED
TO THE POLITICAL SITUATION AND OUTLINED THE HISTORY OF
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COMMUNIST INFILTRATION INTO PARAGUAY FROM ABROAD WHICH
HAD PLAGUED THE COUNTRY EVER SINCE 1947 AND REACHED ITS
HEIGHT DURING THE PERIOD OF 1959/1960. WHILE HE ADMITTED
THAT NO SUCH THREAT EXISTED AT THIS TIME, HE STRESSED
THE NEED FOR CONTROL TO AVOID THE THREAT OF SUBVERSIVES
ENTERING FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. THE PRESIDENT
PICTURED PARAGUAY AS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL TARGETS OF

COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA EMANATING FROM MOSCOW AND HAVANA. THEIR RADIO STATIONS, HE SAID, HAD ZEROED IN ON PARAGUAY, DESCRIBING IT AS A REPRESSIVE COUNTRY IN WHICH, AMONG OTHER REPREHENSIBLE ACTIVITIES, GENOCIDE OF INDIAN TRIBES SUPPOSEDLY IS PRACTICED. HE SAID HE KNEW THAT THIS OUTRIGHT LIE HAD BEEN PICKED UP IN THE UNITED STATES AND HE WAS THEREFORE PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT PROFESSOR RICHARD ARENS, THE AUTHOR OF THE RECENT BOOK GENOCIDE IN PARAGUAY, WAS FINALLY COMING TO PARAGUAY FOR THE FIRST TIME TO SEE FOR HIMSELF WHAT WAS HAPPENING. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD PUT ALL NECESSARY FACILITIES AT ARENS' DISPOSAL TO GO WHEREVER HE WANTED AND TO MAKE ANY INQUIRIES HE DESIRED.

3. AMBASSADOR TODMAN EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE AT HAVING BEEN ABLE TO SEE PARAGUAY'S ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT DURING HIS TRIP TO ITAIPU AND APPLAUDED THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO OPEN ALL DOORS TO PROFESSOR ARENS AS IT HAD DONE RECENTLY FOR AMBASSADOR STEPHANSKY WHO CAME AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS TO LOOK INTO THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. TODMAN SAID HE HOPED THAT AS A NEXT STEP THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOW GIVE THE GREEN LIGHT TO AN IAHRC VISIT WHICH HAS BEEN PENDING FOR QUITE SOME TIME AND WHICH THE GOP HAD NEITHER APPROVED NOR DENIED. HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE THIS VISIT WOULD HAVE ON OUR BILATERAL

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RELATIONS. FAILURE TO PERMIT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO INVESTIGATE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS, HE SAID, CALLED FOR SANCTIONS UNDER THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1976.

4. IN REPLY, PRESIDENT STROESSNER OFFERED THE SAME ARGUMENTS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY GIVEN AMBASSADOR LANDAU ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS: THAT PARAGUAY HAD NO PROBLEMS WITH THE VISIT BECAUSE THE GOP HAD NOTHING TO HIDE BUT THAT IT COULD NOT BREAK SOLIDARITY WITH THE NEIGHBORING STATES, PARTICULARLY BRAZIL AND URUGUAY WHICH HAD COME OUT STRONGLY AGAINST SUCH VISITS. BRAZIL, IN FACT, CONSIDERS VISITS OF THIS NATURE AS AN UNWARRANTED VIOLATION OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. STROESSNER SAID HE WAS NOT AGAINST THE VISIT BUT THAT THIS WAS NOT THE APPROPRIATE TIME FOR THE IAHRC TO COME. HE WOULD KEEP AN OPEN MIND REGARDING A VISIT AT A LATER DATE. THE PRESIDENT ALSO SAID THAT HE WAS UNHAPPY THAT THE U.S. HAD APPLIED PRESSURE IN THIS MATTER BY HOLDING UP LOANS FROM INTERNATIONAL LENDING ORGANIZATIONS.

5. AMBASSADOR TODMAN EXPLAINED THAT OUR ACTIONS

WERE IN LINE WITH THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1976
AND SINCE THE PRESIDENT HAD SAID THAT HE HAD NOTHING
AGAINST THE VISIT PER SE, HE HOPED THE PRESIDENT
WOULD NOT BE COERCED BY PRESSURE FROM BRAZIL AND OTHER
COUNTRIES TO DELAY HIS APPROVAL FOR THE VISIT. AMBASSADOR
TODMAN SUGGESTED THAT IF THE VISIT WAS NOT
CONVENIENT AT THIS TIME FOR LOCAL DOMESTIC REASONS,
E.G., UPCOMING ELECTIONS, THE PRESIDENT COULD GIVE
THE GREEN LIGHT NOW FOR A VISIT AT A LATER MUTUALLY
ACCEPTABLE DATE. TODMAN ALSO ASSURED THE PRESIDENT
THAT THE IAHRC WAS A RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATING GROUP
AND THAT THE GOP COULD EXPECT FAIR TREATMENT FROM THEM.

6. IN REPLY TO THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT THAT HE DID
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NOT UNDERSTAND WHY PARAGUAY SHOULD BE THE FIRST COUNTRY
TO BE VISITED BY THE IAHRC WHEN SO MANY OTHERS HAD
MUCH WORSE HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS, AMBASSADOR LANDAU
MENTIONED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF HAITI HAD JUST AGREED
TO PERMIT AN IAHRC VISIT. STROESSNER SAID HE WAS
NOT MUCH IMPRESSED BY THAT BECAUSE HE DID NOT WANT TO
BE COMPARED TO THE DUVALIER REGIME.

7. AT THE END OF THE DISUCSSION, WHICH AT ALL TIMES
WAS VERY CORDIAL, STROESSNER STATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD
THE IMPORTANCE THE U.S. ASCRIBED TO THE VISIT AND
WOULD KEEP THE MATTER UNDER REVIEW UNTIL THE RIGHT
TIME COULD BE FOUND.
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